

Lesson  
8

# Indefinite Pronoun Agreement

*Teaching*

An **indefinite pronoun** does not refer to a specific person, place, thing, or idea. Indefinite pronouns often do not have antecedents.

Indefinite pronouns can be singular, plural, or either singular or plural.

## Indefinite Pronouns

Singular				Plural	Singular or Plural	
another	each	everything	one	both	all	none
anybody	either	neither	somebody	few	any	some
anyone	everybody	nobody	someone	many	most	
anything	everyone	no one	something	several		

Use a singular personal pronoun to refer to a singular indefinite pronoun. Use *his* or *her* when the antecedent could be either masculine or feminine.

Everyone turned his or her eyes to Cape Canaveral for the liftoff.

Use a plural personal pronoun to refer to a plural indefinite pronoun.

Several of the witnesses covered their eyes in fear.

Some indefinite pronouns can be singular or plural. Often, the phrase that follows the indefinite pronoun tells you whether the indefinite pronoun is singular or plural.

All of the flight went according to its schedule. (singular)

All of the flights went according to their schedules. (plural)

## Using Indefinite Pronouns

In each sentence, underline the correct pronoun choice.

1. All of the astronauts take (his or her, their) training seriously.
2. Each of the program instructors is expert in (his or her, their) specialty.
3. Everybody in the space program was chosen for (their, his or her) abilities.
4. Many are eager for (their, his or her) chance to prove they have the right stuff.
5. Each of the astronauts should know how to handle (his or her, their) ship in case of trouble.
6. Both of the first astronauts accepted (his, their) country's gratitude.
7. Neither of the astronauts was ashamed of (his, their) performance.
8. Someone waved (his or her, their) gloved hand to the crowd and then stepped aboard the space shuttle.
9. Some missions of the space program have had (its, their) share of tragedies.
10. Everyone alive during the explosion of the *Challenger* remembers how (he or she, they) heard the terrible news.
11. All of Christa MacAuliffe's students remember (his or her, their) teacher with gratitude and admiration.

**Lesson  
8****Indefinite Pronoun Agreement****More Practice****A. Identifying Indefinite Pronouns**

Underline the indefinite pronoun in each sentence. Then underline the correct pronoun in parentheses.

1. Many of Rembrandt's paintings have lost (its, their) original colors.
2. Each of the boys prepared (his, their) report independently.
3. All of the salespeople sold (his or her, their) goods at the convention.
4. Nobody expects to hear (his or her, their) name on the radio.
5. If anyone wants to be a doctor, tell (him or her, them) to volunteer for hospital work.
6. Neither of the cats had (its, their) nails clipped.
7. Everyone had a chance to state (his or her, their) opinions.
8. None of the medicine was labeled with (their, its) expiration date.
9. Anyone in the choir can bring (his or her, their) family to the concert.
10. Somebody has left (his or her, their) wallet on my desk.
11. Many of the rescue workers wore (his or her, their) own safety gear.
12. The skaters were choosy; several insisted on selecting the music for (his or her, their) programs.

**B. Using Pronouns Correctly**

In each sentence below, decide whether the pronouns agree with their antecedents. If the sentence is correct, write **Correct** on the line. If it contains a pronoun that does not agree with its antecedent, rewrite the sentence correctly on the line.

1. Everyone was glued to the television set after they heard the news.

2. Some of the networks changed its programming.

3. Everyone was shocked by what they had heard.

4. Most of the witnesses couldn't believe their eyes.

5. Nobody who saw the explosion could get it out of their mind.

# Indefinite Pronoun Agreement

*Application*

## A. Proofreading for Indefinite Pronoun Agreement

Proofread the following paragraph. When you find pronoun-antecedent error, cross out the pronoun. Then insert this proofreading symbol ↵ and write the correct pronoun or pronouns above it.

How would you like to be an astronaut? Everybody, even an astronaut in space, must take care of their body. Without healthy bodies, people can't function at peak level. To make sure the astronauts stay healthy, the space program has provided them with some basic necessities. None of the astronauts' food (some of which comes from a tube) tastes as good as their counterpart on Earth, but dietitians have made them nutritious and easy to eat. All of the astronauts need his or her sleep time. For that reason, each of the astronauts has their own sleeping couch. This couch is probably not too comfortable, and an astronaut has to strap himself or herself to it to keep from floating away. Could you stand these conditions for weeks? The sad truth is that even though almost everyone dreams about the adventure of space travel, they may not have the willpower to face its uncomfortable realities.

## B. Using Indefinite Pronouns in Writing

Imagine that you are one of six astronauts aboard a space shuttle. Write a diary entry about part of a day in space. Tell what you did and what others in your group did and said. Use at least four indefinite pronouns. Be sure that any personal pronouns agree with their indefinite pronoun antecedents in number.

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